

**MINUTES**

**MONTANA SENATE  
58th LEGISLATURE - REGULAR SESSION**

**CONFERENCE COMMITTEE ON HOUSE AMENDMENTS TO SENATE BILL 47**

**Call to Order:** By **CHAIRMAN KELLY GEBHARDT**, on March 27, 2003 at  
7 A.M., in Room 350 Capitol.

**ROLL CALL**

**Members Present:**

Sen. Kelly Gebhardt, Chairman (R)  
Rep. Scott Mendenhall, Chairman (R)  
Rep. Larry Cyr (D)  
Sen. John Esp (R)  
Rep. Penny Morgan (R)  
Sen. Mike Wheat (D)

**Members Excused:** None.

**Members Absent:** None.

**Staff Present:** Jennifer Stephens, Committee Secretary  
Connie Erickson, Legislative Staffer

**Please Note.** These are summary minutes. Testimony and discussion  
are paraphrased and condensed.

**Committee Business Summary:**

Hearing & Date Posted:  
Executive Action: SB 47

**SEN. KELLY GEBHARDT** opened the conference committee with a brief description of SB 47. He explained that the bill would raise the state gas tax. He mentioned the different figures that had been considered in both the House and the Senate. He said the committee needed to decide on a figure between \$4,000 and \$25,000.

**SEN. JOHN ESP** asked **SEN. GEBHARDT** to state his rationale for increasing the gas tax. **SEN. GEBHARDT** explained that the tax had been in place for 48 years. Considering inflation, he estimated the tax should currently be set at approximately \$28,000. He said the original reason for coming forward with the bill was because it cost so much to go through the process of raising the tax. He used advertising and interviewing costs as examples. He also added that the cost accrued by the companies who submit the proposals also has to be considered. **SEN. GEBHARDT** thinks a change in the bid threshold is due because it hasn't been adjusted to inflation since it was passed 48 years ago.

**REP. PENNY MORGAN** said she tended to lean more on the conservative side. She also mentioned that she had made quite a few phone calls to constituents. She does not have a problem with increasing the tax to \$25,000.

**SEN. MIKE WHEAT** asked **SEN. GEBHARDT** if the \$25,000 dovetailed. **SEN. GEBHARDT** said that it was his goal this session to make all of the bid thresholds uniform but so far the thresholds have ranged anywhere from \$25,000 to \$50,000.

**SEN. JOHN ESP** moved that page 3, line 5 be changed to adjust the bid threshold to \$25,000. Motion carried 5-1 with **REP. MENDENHALL** voting no.

**Connie Erickson, Legislative Staffer**, explained that in a conference committee, the votes from both the Senate and the House must be tabulated separately and a majority must be met in both houses.

The secretary took a roll call vote. Motion carried with **SEN. GEBHARDT**, **SEN. ESP**, AND **SEN. WHEAT** voting aye. **REP. MORGAN** and **REP. CYR** voted aye and **REP. MENDENHALL** voted no. Motion carried on a 5-1 vote.

**ADJOURNMENT**

Adjournment: 7:10 A.M.

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SEN. KELLY GEBHARDT, Chairman

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JENNIFER STEPHENS, Secretary

SM/KG/

**EXHIBIT** (ccs65sb0047aad)